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**Reflective Teaching and Disruptive Behaviour
in Regular High School Classrooms in London,
England**

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Abstract

Despite conflicting reports on the state of disruptive behaviour in schools it continues to be a perennial one for all teachers. The purpose of this self-study, which utilises personal experience stories in the form of vignettes taken from my experience of teaching in various high schools in London England, is to illustrate how teaching reflectively can result in the reinforcement of practical or work-related knowledge regarding the utilisation of appropriate behavioural management strategies in local schools. Although the study is limited to classrooms in England, disruptive behaviour is a world-wide occurrence therefore it has potential relevance for educators in other countries.

Key words

Reflective Learning and Teaching; Disruptive Behaviour; London England; Teachers; High School Students.

Introduction

Despite conflicting reports on the state of disruptive behaviour in schools (Haydn, 2014), it continues to be a perennial one for all teachers (Pollard et al, 2012; The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) 2014; and Haydn, 2014). For example, Haydn (2014) states that in England, over forty percent (40%) of teachers leave the profession within five years of being qualified, and students' disruptive behaviour of all category and types was one of the most commonly cited reasons for leaving.

The purpose of this self-study, which utilises personal experience stories in the form of vignettes taken from my experience of teaching in various high schools in London England, is to illustrate how teaching reflectively can result in the reinforcement of practical or work-related knowledge regarding the utilisation of appropriate behavioural management strategies in local schools.

This report commences with a succinct discussion of reflective teaching and the extent to which teaching reflectively could potentially enable the development or reinforcement of teachers' practical or work-related knowledge of addressing disruptive behaviours in schools. Embedded in the discussion are the following: a definition of the term disruptive behaviours; causes; categories and types of behaviour management strategies; and how teaching reflectively could potentially enable the selection and utilisation of appropriate strategies to reduce and/or address disruptive behaviours. The report ends with a critical discussion and display of how, via reflective teaching, I reinforced my practical or work-related knowledge of addressing disruptive behaviours while teaching in a variety of schools in London, England. The usefulness of the study for the education and training of student teachers are outlined and the limitations stated.

Citation

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Developing or reinforcing practical or work-related knowledge of addressing disruptive behaviours in school through reflective teaching

It is now an accepted fact that teachers value and draw heavily on their practical or work-related knowledge i.e., knowledge gained as they grapple with the daily challenges of teaching and as they seek to refine their professional practice (Marland, 1998). Inevitably, this knowledge shapes all aspects of the teaching-learning dynamics in which they engage or which they encounter (Venn and McCollum, 2002). The role of reflection in enabling the development or reinforcement of practical or work-related knowledge was strongly presented in my previous published work (Minott, 2010). For example, I argued that teaching reflectively shifts the responsibility of acquiring practical or work-related knowledge from preceptors to the individuals and the employment of reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action are processes that create knowledge about classroom practice, students and situations (Schön, 1983; Zeichner & Liston, 1996). I also made the point that an attitude of self-directed inquiry into one's practice and the development of practical or work-related knowledge based on inquiry are not only fundamental to teachers' developing or reinforcing practical or work-related knowledge, but are requirements for effective reflective teaching. But what is reflective teaching? What are its facets? And how does it influence this study?

Reflective teaching is perennial and has become very popular world-wide. See for example the work of Cole (1997), Canada, Hatton and Smith (1995), Australia, Zeichner and Liston (1996), United States, Ghaye and Ghaye (1998), United Kingdom, Day (1999) United Kingdom, Farrell (2001), Singapore, and Hyrkas, Tarkka and Ilmonen (2000) Finland. This world-wide popularity has resulted in an abundance of literature on the practice. For example, Minott (2009) outlines how teachers in the Cayman Islands utilise elements of reflective teaching during their lesson planning, implementation and evaluation. Farrell (2001) argues that reflective teaching involves teachers learning to subject their beliefs to critical analysis and taking responsibility for their actions, therefore opportunities for them to use conscious reflection is necessary. Day (1999) examines the nature of reflective practice, its purposes and contexts and the kinds of investments individuals need to make in order to sustain and develop quality teaching over the course of a career.

A careful review of these and other literary sources points out the benefits experienced by teachers and schools employing the practice. Firstly, they highlight the fact that the main aim of teaching reflectively is the improvement of practice on an ongoing basis. This involves employing and developing cognitive skills as a means of improving practice. To do so, teachers recall, consider or critically think about, and evaluate their teaching experiences as a means of improving future ones (Farrell, 2001). Hyrkas, Tarkka & Ilmonen (2001), point out that this process should be a self-directed, ongoing critical inquiry into practice, initiated by them and not administratively decreed. This results in the development of contextualised knowledge. The ideas in this paragraph are those which heavily influenced this study. For example (as will be shown later), recalling, considering or critically thinking about and evaluating my teaching experiences resulted in the reinforcement of strategies in addressing disruptive behaviours in the classroom and knowledge of various schools' contexts. Additionally, as a reflective practitioner, these activities were driven by a deep desire to improve my practice.

Secondly, reflective teaching requires that teachers use and develop their affective skills as a means of improving their practice. A number of writers explain the place of the affective in teaching reflectively. Zeichner and Liston (1996) state that reflective teaching involves questioning personal belief, values and assumption about teaching, Markham (1999) posits that reflective teaching involves exercising personal judgment, and Day (1999) suggests that it involves engaging in the disclosure of personal feelings and sharing these as a part of a collaborative experience.

Thirdly, the literature also suggests that schools benefit when reflective teaching is encouraged. Hyrkas, Tarkka & Ilmonen (2001) point out, reflective teaching can lead to creative and innovative approaches to classroom and school situations and problems, and this could eventuate into improved learning opportunities for students. When this happens, the school could boast improved student learning. Posner (1989) argues that reflective teaching involves critical thinking, which aids teachers in being deliberate and intentional in devising new teaching methods, rather than being a slave to tradition or to challenge accepted ways that schools have always carried out the tasks of teaching. The ideas of Hyrkas, Tarkka & Ilmonen (2001) (as will be shown later) was practically displayed in this study in the creative approaches to addressing disruptive behaviours in school.

Drawing on these and other writings, the next section of this report potentially answers the question 'How could teaching reflectively enable teachers to develop or reinforce practical or work-related knowledge of addressing disruptive behaviours in schools?' As indicated in the foregoing discussion, embedded in this section of the paper are the following: a definition of the term disruptive behaviours; causes; categories and types of behaviour management strategies; and how teaching reflectively could potentially enable the selection and utilisation of appropriate strategies to reduce and/or address disruptive behaviours.

Definition, causes of disruptive behaviours, reflective teaching and practical or work-related knowledge

Levin and Nolan (1996) and Wallace (2011), in defining the term disruptive behaviour, get to the heart of the matter when they state that disruptive behaviour must be defined in relation to learning. Therefore, any behaviour which presents a barrier to others' learning or inhibits the achievement of the teacher's purposes is a disruptive behaviour. This definition is useful in that it helps to narrow the focus of this study and make a distinction between the types of disruptive behaviours being referenced in this study and those which may occur in other settings, such as workplaces and correctional facilities, which may include actions such as protests and riots.

Speaking about the causes of disruptive behaviour in schools, Pollard et al (2012) and De Wet (2003) argue that such things as the quality of one's classroom management skills, inadequacy of teachers as role models and teachers' professional incompetence (that is lack of educational/didactic expertise) affect behaviour. However, the writers also point out that other factors, such as students' demotivation, negative school climate, overcrowded schools, deficient organisational structure of the school, and rundown, ill-kept physical appearance of the school can also contribute. Other causes include boredom, an inability to do the work a teacher sets, and effort demanded for too long a period without a break. Some of these causes can be anticipated and avoided by careful lesson planning and deploying appropriate classroom management strategies. However, to these important points raised by Pollard et al (2012) and De Wet (2003), I would add that reflective teaching is fundamental to the activities of careful lesson planning and deploying appropriate classroom management strategies. This is so, because (as will be shown later in this report), it was through activities involved in teaching reflectively that I was able to not only implement lessons, but deploy appropriate classroom management strategies which addressed disruptive behaviours.

Wallace (2011) highlights factors such as being bored and unmotivated, avoiding work that requires some 'effort', and a lack of interest and commitment. To this list, Levin and Nolan (1996) add off-task behaviours such as fidgeting, doodling, inattentiveness and tardiness. O'Hara (2008), speaking about disruptive behaviour in 3-8 year olds, states that one cause of this behaviour may be the fact that the child has not learned what is and is not acceptable behaviour in the school context. It could also be linked to the fact that the child is still maturing and developing an awareness of what is expected, alongside the skills of patience and self-control. This thought is also supported by Gootman (1997)

who states that some young learners misbehave simply because they do not understand the “rules” of the classroom.

There may be other factors such as learning, social and environmental factors, such as classroom climate (Haydn, 2014), distress and disruption at home (Walsh & Williams, 1997 and Rayment, 2006), or students with special needs (Daniels, 2001 and Irish National Teacher Organisation, 2004), that contribute to disruptive behaviour. A thorough examination of the multiplicity of factors which contribute to disruptive behaviour is beyond the scope of this literature review and would detract from the main aim, which is to display, potentially, how teaching reflectively could enable teachers to develop or reinforce practical or work-related knowledge of addressing disruptive behaviours in schools.

While it is accepted that the causes of disruptive behaviour are many, and these kinds of behaviours will occur and sometimes reoccur, what is important for the teacher is the development of her or his ability to select and utilise appropriate management strategies to aid in reducing or addressing these kinds of behaviour. This thought is important because there is no known scientific, tested systemic approach to which teachers may refer when selecting and utilising strategies for managing disruptive behaviour. Rather, what is suggested is that: they should be alert and watch for situations that may deteriorate (O’Hara, 2008); they should be aware and sensitive and should be ‘with it’ (Pollard et al, 2012); and develop skills in diagnostic and reflective thinking (Daniels, 2001).

This seems to suggest that the process of selecting and utilising strategies to aid in reducing disruptive behaviour is best done in a reflective manner. This is so because the attributes and skills presented by Daniels (2001), O’Hara (2008) and Pollard et al (2012) are facets of the affective aspects of being a reflective teacher. This thought is supported by Markham (1999), who states that reflective teachers use their intuition, initiative and experience during teaching, and exercise personal judgment about a number of classroom issues and teaching methods. I can further infer from these writers (as will be shown later), that it is via these reflective actions that not only appropriate responses to disruptive behaviours are selected and utilised, but knowledge about engaging with such behaviour (should they reoccur) are either developed or reinforced.

Categories and types of disruptive behaviour, reflective teaching and practical or work-related knowledge

Disruptive behaviours are categorised using terms such as classroom crisis or recurring challenges (Pollard et al, 2012). Examples of classroom crisis is a child who is ill or hurt or has cut her fingers, and recurring challenges or common disruptive behaviours may include talking while the teacher talks and distracting other learners’ attention, refusing to follow directions or displaying aggressive behaviour (Levin and Nolan, 1996). Wallace (2011), in categorising disruptive behaviour, refers to violent and confrontational or non-violent and non-confrontational. Examples of common recurring, non-violent and non-confrontational disruptive behaviours are: arriving late for a lesson, excessive talking or talking while the teacher is talking and/or talking about things irrelevant to the lesson (Wheldall and Merrett, 1988), hindering others or distracting other learners’ attention, not getting on with the work or complaining and refusing to work, being noisy both verbally and non-verbally, using or answering mobile phones during a lesson, not paying attention to the teacher, expressing boredom and lack of interest, and students being out of their seats without good reason (The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) 2014 and Marais and Meier, 2010).

Examples of violent and confrontational disruptive behaviours may include using tools in a workshop to fight with, or students arguing with the teacher, threats to other learners, listening to music on a headphone when she or he should be listening to the teacher and challenging the teacher’s authority. These kinds of disruptive behaviours are, however, extremely rare or are not frequently

reported (Pollard 2012; Levin and Nolan, 1996; and Wallace 2011). However, when they do occur they are by far the most challenging disruptive behaviour to address (Rayment, 2006).

Having said this, when potentially violent and confrontational disruptive behaviour does occur, it may be necessary to enact the school's policy and practice in addressing these and/or draw on the support of other teachers, especially those who are saddled with the responsible of maintaining whole school discipline. This was an action I took—facilitated by the act of reflecting-in-action (Schön 1983) – during a teaching episode used in this study. This episode is outlined and discussed later in this report.

There is, however, overwhelming consensus among writers that the ideal strategy to employ when addressing this perennial issue is to be proactive, i.e., preventing disruptive behaviours rather than being reactive, i.e., correcting disruptive behaviours (Marais and Meier, 2010; Pollard et al, 2012; and Wallace, 2011). A critical aspect of being proactive is being reflective (Daniels, 2001 and Wallace, 2011). There is the need for teachers to be pragmatic and reflective when being proactive in addressing all types of disruptive behaviours so as to enable the process of learning to continue. For example, (after reflecting on a classroom episode) the teacher may group students who persist in talking thus enabling others to 'get on with the work' or tell a student who has been verbally abusive that the issue will be dealt with at the end of the session. I can also infer that this reflective action not only facilitates the choice of appropriate action to be used to prevent or minimise disruptive behaviours of all types (as will be shown later), but reinforces or develops practical or work-related knowledge about engaging with such behaviours should they reoccur.

This succinct review shows, potentially, how teaching reflectively could be utilised as a framework for not only reinforcing or developing practical or work-related knowledge of disruptive behaviours in schools, but utilising appropriate behavioural management strategy. Having said this, 'What practical or work-related knowledge on addressing disruptive behaviours did I reinforce during my teaching in schools in London, England? This is the main focus of the next section of the study where I critically discuss vignettes, thus showing what practical or work-related knowledge I reinforced for addressing disruptive behaviours in schools. The vignettes selected reflect the most common types of disruptive behaviours I observed, i.e., non-violent and non-confrontational. Throughout this section, situations and events indicating practical or work-related knowledge reinforced via reflective teaching are italicised for ease of reference.

Reflective teaching and reinforcing practical or work-related knowledge of employing a proactive approach to, and appropriate strategies for managing common recurring disruptive behaviours(Vignette 1)

I recall teaching a number of grade 9 classes at a local high school for boys in London. During the first few learning sessions, I had to tell students, on a number of occasions, to resist the temptation to talk while the teacher talks and/or talk about things irrelevant to the lesson and to not distract other learners' attention. I quickly noticed that the strategy of talking to the students about these disruptive behaviours worked only for a short time and, on a number of occasions, I had to repeat my request. As I planned for and reflected on the next learning session, I concluded that I needed to be proactive instead of reactive in reducing these kinds of disruptive behaviours (Marais and Meier 2010, Pollard et al, 2012, and Wallace 2011). By engaging in this reflective action, I 'framed' the problem as my approach. Schön (1983) refers to framing as the ability to recognise problematic issues and determine what actions need to be taken to change the situation.

As I reflected on ways I could be proactive, I considered: the context (classroom layout) the class-make up (boys), the subject being taught (Drama), own experience and knowledge of managing

disruptive behaviour and my observation of how teachers in the school 'handle' disruptive behaviour. Based on my reflection on these areas, I decided to implement the following proactive actions and accompanying strategies to aid in reducing students talking while the teacher talks and/or talking about things irrelevant to the lesson and distracting other learners' attention.

For the next learning session, I stood outside the classroom door to receive the boys and did not allow them to enter the room like a 'herd', as previously occurred. I had them form a line and sternly asked for their full attention, which I got (this was a strategy to which they were accustomed and I observed that many teachers in the school used it). These actions resulted in total silence from the boys. The action of observing and reflecting on context and contextual occurrences is indicative of reflective teaching (Zeichner and Liston, 1996).

I then gave them clear instructions about what they should do on entering the room (having taken into consideration the context or layout and what they were normally accustomed to do on entering). For example, putting their bags in the corner of the room allotted for that purpose and remaining silent as this task is done. I then placed them in small groups, as this was a required task set by the resident teacher. However, as a mean of reducing talk about things not related to the lesson, students who were known to be friends were placed in separate groups. I then asked them to select a group leader who would be responsible for ensuring that the assigned tasks were successfully completed. Group leaders would only report to me and were also accountable to me for the actions of their group members.

Throughout the learning session, I would personally monitor the activities of each group and periodically call on a group leader to explain why his group was 'off-task' or to ask how far the group had reached with the assigned tasks. This action resulted in further 'policing' of the groups by the leaders. Additionally, the constant monitoring and frequent checking helped to keep the students on tasks and their conversation relevant to the assigned tasks. This was so, because my frequent listening to their conversations made them less inclined to talk about things irrelevant to the lesson. Overall, the class was not without minor disruptions, for the total elimination of disruptive behaviour is impossible (Pollard et al, 2012); however, disruptive behaviour was drastically reduced as a result of my decision (based on reflection) to be proactive.

In the example above, I reinforced the knowledge that reflection-on-action before action is integral to being proactive in reducing common recurring disruptive behaviour. In other words, I gave careful thought to all aspects of the learning environment and the future actions to be taken that would minimise the disruptive behaviour, i.e., talking while the teacher talks and/or talking about things irrelevant to the lesson and distracting other learners' attention. Based on this reflection or critical thinking, I planned and implemented appropriate strategies aimed at preventing or reducing disruptive behaviours.

I reinforced the knowledge that strategies for managing common recurring disruptive behaviours will emerge when I 'frame' the problem, critically think about the students, context (classroom), personal knowledge and experience of strategies used to reduce disruptive behaviour and the overall strategy observed being used by most teachers in the school.

I reinforced the knowledge that reflection-on-context results in the development of knowledge specific to a school context. This can be seen in the fact that I discovered what seems to be the school's preferred strategy for managing disruptive behaviour, and what actions students were accustomed to take on entering the classroom. These were achieved by keenly observing and analysing various teachers in action. This reflective act is supported by Calderhead (1992), who points out that reflective teaching enables teachers to analyse and evaluate school and classrooms

activities, and make use of what they have learned to inform decision-making, planning and future actions. This thought is also in-line with that of Borthwick and Pierson (2008), who point out that the development and/or reinforcement of practical or work-related knowledge (generally) must include an examination and understanding of lessons learned from practice.

Reflective teaching and reinforcing practical or work-related knowledge of employing a reactive approach to, and appropriate strategies for managing common recurring disruptive behaviours (Vignette 2)

In another teaching episode with a grade 9 class in a local high school for girls in London, there was one student who constantly talked out of turn even though I had encouraged her, on a number of occasions, to stop distracting other learners and to 'stay-on-task'.

Since the other students were engaged in the assigned task and she was the one obviously engaged in the disruptive behaviour, I invited her to join me outside the classroom door, and told her, that if she persisted in being disruptive, then the school's policy on such behaviour would be pursued. Additionally, I would stand next to the student's desk and when I was attending to another student, I would also keep her in my sightline or turn and look at her frequently, if my location in the classroom required me to do so. I also loudly encouraged her with praises such as 'You are doing well' 'Keep up the good work'. This reactive approach and the accompanying strategies 'worked' in enabling me to get through the remainder of the learning task with only very minor disruptions from this student. This use of private rather than public reprimands is advocated by the literature (Wallace 2011 and Pollard et al, 2012). Additionally, since I was in that school for a day and covered that class once for that day, a proactive approach to addressing such disruptive behaviour was impractical.

In this vignette, I reflected-in-action and 'framed' the student's need for constant and close supervision as the 'problem' (Schön, 1983), and engaged in the kinds of actions that would fulfil the student's unspoken need. I, however, left the school that day thinking about the student and whether or not she was diagnosed with behavioural disorders or the fact that she may have encountered problems in the classroom which could have caused her disruptive behaviour. This act of reflecting or thinking critically about actions and classroom episodes after they have occurred is supported by Calderhead (1992), who states that reflective teachers analyse and evaluate classroom incidence and make use of what they have learnt to inform future action.

From this example, I reinforced the knowledge that strategies for managing common recurring disruptive behaviours will emerge when I 'frame' the problem, critically thinks 'on the spot' (i.e., reflection-in-action Schön, 1983) about students, context (classroom), personal knowledge and experience of strategies used to reduce disruptive behaviour and the school's overall policy on managing disruptive behaviour. This is so, because, I selected certain strategies by thinking critically about the student, my knowledge of strategies for managing disruptive behaviour, using higher order thinking skills such as analysing the situation and the students, and synthesizing a solution.

This experience also reinforced the knowledge that the careful and selected use of appropriate strategies for managing disruptive behaviour, such as speaking to students privately about inappropriate conduct, praising students and giving one-to-one attention (facilitated by reflection-in-action) does reduce incidences of common disruptive behaviour in the classroom.

Reflective teaching and reinforcing practical or work-related knowledge of employing a reactive approach to, and appropriate strategies for managing a potential crisis or violent or confrontational disruptive behaviours (Vignette 3)

In a teaching episode with a grade 10 class in a mixed or co-educational high school in London, a small number of students seemed uninterested in the learning tasks and very disruptive. I decided to randomly select students from that small group and invited them to have a one-on-one chat with me. However, during this process, two male students engaged in an argument and were on the verge of starting a 'fist-fight'. So sharp was the disagreement that they 'got into each-others' face' and began shouting at each other. The tension mounted, as I watched the scenario unfold. Sensing that the situation could escalate into physical violence, I sent a student to get the person assigned by the school to address such extreme disruptive behaviour. My response was a reactive approach to such level of disruption based on my reflection-in-action, i.e., thinking in the 'thick of things' (Schön, 1983). The teacher came and took the boys out of the classroom. I then continued with my enquiry with the students in the small group. I asked one student why he was behaving the way he was. He told me that he wanted to become a football player and therefore did not see how [the subject] was going to help him in his chosen career. A female student, also from the small group, said that she did not like the subject and thought it was boring and was a waste of time. My action of talking with the students in the small group to ascertain their thoughts on their disruptive behaviour was aimed at finding a solution to a problem i.e., their disinterest in the subject. This act of finding a solution to classroom problem is a feature of reflective teaching (Hyrkas, Tarkka & Ilmonen, 2001).

In this vignette I 'framed' the behaviour of a small group of students as the 'problem' and took appropriate steps to ascertain the cause for the behaviours being displayed.

From this example *I reinforced the knowledge that strategies for managing crisis or violent or confrontational disruptive behaviour will emerge when I critically think 'on the spot' (i.e., reflection-in-action) about the students, context (classroom), personal knowledge and experience of strategies used to reduce disruptive behaviour and the school's overall policy on managing these kinds of disruptive behaviour.* This is so, because my decision (facilitated by reflection-in-action) to pull on, and utilise the school's support mechanism for addressing these kind of behaviour 'worked' and may have prevented one or both students from being physically injured.

I also reinforced the knowledge (facilitated by reflection-in-action) that there are many causes for crisis or violent or confrontational and/or common recurring disruptive behaviour. In this example, one cause was that a particularly disruptive student perceived the subject being taught as irrelevant to his future career goals and plans, and another perceived it as boring and a waste of time. This level of disinterest, which prevents students from even attempting the assigned tasks, can be the catalyst and incubator for crisis or violent or confrontational disruptive behaviours as displayed in this vignette.

Conclusion

This self-study which utilises personal experience stories in the form of vignettes continues the process of forwarding the idea that teaching reflectively is an excellent framework through which practical or work-related knowledge is developed or reinforced (Minott, 2010).

Specifically, the study described how, by employing elements of reflective teaching while teaching in selected high schools in London, England, I reinforced practical or work-related knowledge of addressing disruptive behaviour in schools. Below is my own list of practical or work-related knowledge regarding the selection and utilisation of strategies I reinforced via reflective teaching, and which I now have at my disposal for future use.

1. Reflection-on-action before action is integral to being proactive in reducing common recurring disruptive behaviour.
2. Strategies for managing common recurring disruptive behaviours will emerge when one employs reflection-on-action before action i.e., 'frames' the 'problem', critically think about the students, context (classroom), personal knowledge and experience of strategies used to reduce disruptive behaviour and the overall strategy used by most teachers in a particular school.
3. Reflection-on- context results in the development of knowledge specific to a school's context.
4. Strategies for managing common recurring disruptive behaviours will emerge when one 'frames' the 'problem', critically think 'on the spot' (reflection-in-action) about the student, context (classroom), personal knowledge and experience of strategies used to reduce disruptive behaviour and the school's overall policy on managing disruptive behaviour.
5. The careful and selected use of appropriate strategies for managing disruptive behaviour (facilitated by reflection-in-action) does reduce incidences of common disruptive behaviour in the classroom.
6. Strategies for managing crisis or violent or confrontational disruptive behaviour will emerge when one 'frames' the 'problem' critically think 'on the spot'(reflection-in-action) about the students, context (classroom), personal knowledge and experience of strategies used to reduce disruptive behaviour and a school's overall policy on managing disruptive behaviour.
7. There are many causes for crisis or violent or confrontational and/or common recurring disruptive behaviour which can be ascertained by a teacher who is willing and able to give time to such an endeavour.

The strategies portrayed in this study of how I engaged in reflective teaching, thus reinforcing practical or work-related knowledge, are anything but simple, for what is required is careful consideration, together with a process of disciplined intellectual criticism combining research, knowledge of context/classroom and balanced judgment (critical thinking) (Minott, 2009). This implies there is the need to 'make time' for reflection which may be a difficult undertaking for already busy teachers and those who are 'less reflective' (Posner 1989). However, given appropriate support, individual teachers could be encouraged to see and appreciate the value of engaging in these activities.

Usefulness of the study for the education and training of student teachers

The findings of this study are useful to the education and training of student teachers in a number of ways.

Firstly, the study suggests the need to continue and/or introduce modules and continued professional development sessions in reflective teaching in the education and training of teachers at the pre-service and in-service levels. The usefulness of reflective teaching in improving an aspect of the learning-teaching dynamics and reinforcing practical or work-related knowledge (as displayed in this study) helps to justify the introduction and/or continued use of such modules or professional development sessions.

Secondly, the study provides current examples of reflective teaching and its role in addressing disruptive behaviours in local schools, concrete examples of causes of disruptive behaviours and useful management strategies. These should be shared with student teachers via lectures or tutorials on teaching or addressing in-school issues and/or the study included on a list or required readings. Doing so is important because Glenn (2006) states that student teachers highlight good classroom organisation, management and planning as skills they wish to improve and see demonstrated by their university supervisors.

Thirdly, and most importantly, the study could help student teachers connect theory with practice. Jeronen and Pikkarainen (1999) state that this is an aim in many teacher education programmes; however, many studies suggest that there is a gap between what is taught by university lecturers and that which takes place in the classroom (Allsopp, DeMarie, Alvarez-McHatton, & Doone, 2006, Sandwell, 2007 & Smith 2007). Used as a basis for discussion during lectures or tutorial, the study could be used to highlight examples of disruptive behaviours presently occurring in schools along with useful management strategies. Additionally, the study provides a picture of current happenings in a variety of classrooms in London generally, and demonstrates how behaviour strategies are utilised. It also offers student teachers access to the pedagogical reasoning, feelings and thoughts that accompany actions (Conklin, 2008).

Limitations

When considering this study and its contributions, the following limitations must be borne in mind. Firstly, the study examines disruptive behaviour in schools from a narrow perspective, that is, my own experience in a selected number of schools in London, England. While this narrow perspective made the study manageable and achievable and fits well in the framework of a self-study it precludes large-scale generalisation of the findings. However, readers are left to make their own judgement regarding generalisation

Secondly, since the study relied on self-reports and descriptive information, I had to rely on memory recollections of past events or situations. This provided room for important details to be left out, withheld and subjected to the problems inherent to memory such as memory loss and distortion. Because of these factors, the data presented were a reflection of what I remembered and chose to disclose. The results, therefore, were also not necessarily full and complete accounts of events or situations I recounted. In addition, it was not within the scope of the study to corroborate accounts of events or situations I described.

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